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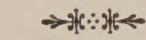
INTRODUCTION BY REV. JOSIAH STRONG, D. D.



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CHICAGO: 148 and 150 MADISON STREET. | NEW YORK: 30 UNION SQUARE: EAST.

Publishers of Evangelical Literature.

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I DEDICATE

THESE UTTERANCES

TO MY FRIEND,

THE REV. LESTER L. WEST.

INTRODUCTION.

THE truth which is the subject of this book is altogether central. A larger . . . conception of Christ means a larger . . . conception of God, a larger conception of man, a larger conception of life, a clearer and more adequate perception of duty both to God and to our fellows.

The church's conception of her mission has been far too narrow. Her all-absorbing aim, when well enough awake to be in earnest, has been to bring individual souls into right relations with God, to rescue as many as possible from a wrecked and sinking world. It has hardly dawned upon her as yet that her commission includes the saving of the wreck itself, the quieting of its confusion and struggle, the relief of its wretchedness, a deliver-

ance from its destruction. This narrow interpretation of the commission of the church has been due to a narrow conception of Christ and his mission. No greater service can be rendered to the church to-day than to give her a truer, larger vision of the Christ. The author, in his first discourse, shows that "The Discovery of Christ is the Need of Our Times," that theology must find Christ, that the visible church must find in him a more sufficient Saviour, that society and the state must find Christ, that Christ came as the Redeemer of the earth, "came not to increase the census of heaven but to improve the status of earth's righteousness." In his second discourse he shows that the discovery of Christ is the discovery of the cross, and that the true saving power in the world must ever be "Innocence Suffering for Guilt." In the third, "The Growing Christ—the Dying Self," he teaches what a self-indulgent church sorely needs to learn, that we can become partakers of Christ's life and saving power only so far as we become partakers of his death; and in the fourth and final dis-

course he shows that such death is followed by resurrection to a larger life.

"This essential inherence of self-denial in the Christian system," says Mark Hopkins "is a doctrine that has faded, perhaps is fading, from the consciousness of the church, and greatly needs to be freshened and revived." This the author feels profoundly and perceives that to give the church a clearer conception of the necessity of self-abandonment is to reveal more fully the deep meaning of the cross and to afford a nearer, larger vision of the Christ as the Redeemer from sin and the wretchedness which is its offspring.

While many run to and fro in the earth with their social panaceas, crying "Lo, here!" or "Lo, there!" in this volume there speaks a man with the profound conviction and intense earnestness of one of the old Hebrew prophets, believing that he utters a "Thus saith the Lord." What he says has not been reasoned out but experienced. We find no logical process, no carefully wrought syllogism. The truths he utters have been felt

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out or rather *suffered out* in a close sympathy and acquaintance with Christ.

It is not necessary to indorse every position taken by the author in order to catch his inspiration and be borne on by his impetuous enthusiasm. I do not think the book can be widely read without kindling in the church a blessed conflagration which will consume much worldliness and afford increased light and heat.

Josiah Strong.

New York, April 21st, 1891.

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I

The Discovery of Christ The Need of Our Times.

THE apostles did not dare—they did not find it possible—to think of human society, except as constituted in Christ. It was the confusion, the unbelief of men, to regard themselves as capable of fellowship and of existence without him. It was theirs to proclaim that there could have been no families, no nations, to resist the selfish tendencies which each of us is conscious of in himself, and complains of in his neighbors, if there had not been one living center of the whole body of humanity, one head of every man.—*F. D. Maurice.*

OUR churches are growing, our missionary operations extending, our benefactions swelling, and we congratulate ourselves upon our progress; but we have only to continue making the same kind of progress long enough, and our destruction is sure.—*Josiah Strong.*

THE judgment is an object of desire. The patience with which the forces of wrong and fraud, the evil of the world, is endured is with the conviction that a day of doom shall come. The prayer thus has always been, *Arise, O Lord, and judge the earth.* Through the ages it has been repeated, *Let the earth rejoice, for he cometh in righteousness to judge the world and the people with his truth.* The man of affairs, the statesman whose ethical conception does not consist with the material system and commercial theories of recent schools, has said that what he dreaded for his land was not the day of judgment, but the day of no judgment.—*Elisha Mulford.*

AND I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon, called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And his eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written, which no one knoweth but he himself. And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood, and his name is called, The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. And out of his mouth proceeded a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his garment, and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.—*John the Apostle.*

I

The Discovery of Christ The Need of Our Times.

He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.—John 1:41.

IT was a great day in Andrew's life, and a quick and vast unfolding of the race's life, when the hope of the earth began to possess the apostle's soul and worded itself in that highest and most prophetic of human utterances, *We have found the Christ.* There is a divine joyousness in his announcement of his discovery to his brother Peter; his words throb with a divine expectancy.

But this was only the beginning of Andrew's discovery of the Messias. He had, in fact, found but little of the real Christ;

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he had, as yet, but the dimmest vision of the Lord's character. He found Christ anew in the Sermon on the Mount. Christ grew larger to his thought as he saw him heal the sick, teach the inquiring, forgive the sinning. Christ grew mightier in his plans for the future when he saw him feed the thousands, still the storm, raise the dead. The Christ in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, strengthening the disciples for the crisis of the Crucifixion, was far more wonderful to Andrew's conception than the Christ to whom he introduced Peter. Andrew's apprehension of Christ after Pentecost was immeasurably truer and greater than before the Ascension. Doubtless Andrew is still finding the Christ; Christ is still enlarging within Andrew's vision.

It is a high day in any man's life—and always a quickening of the divine pulse-beat of the race—when his divine possibilities utter their prophecies in the declaration, I have found the Christ. But every true conversion is only the beginning of the soul's discovery of the Saviour. Conversion is the

springtime of character. The heat and storm, the strifes with the elements that strengthen or destroy, are yet to come. Conversion is the point from whence we follow on to know the Lord. The work of Christ within and upon the redeemed soul is unending. The study of Christ is exhaustless; we never graduate from the school of our divine Teacher. Logic has perpetrated no more soul-dwarfing absurdity—and its absurdities are, alas! legion—than a statement of Christian doctrine which presumes to compass the whole truth as it is in Jesus. Paul and John never claimed to possess such spiritual knowledge; they were always *disciples;* to them the following of Christ was a journey of enlarging and unceasing discovery. Nearly thirty years after his conversion, after all those years of intense and herculean toil and thought, Paul's most passionate desire was that he might know the Christ. One of the women of Browning's poetry went through the days with her—

"Eyes upturned,
As if life were one long and sweet surprise."

Such the Christ-life ever is to the disciple who walks with expectant eyes upon his Master. Christ is ever-new to the Christian whose vision of the Lord is not obscured by the shadow of his own selfishness. The grace of the Lord is ever-mightier to arms of faith; his beauty grows ever-more resplendent to the pure in heart; his salvation is an ever-deepening reality to the obedient. The discovery and revelation of Christ is the business of life; it is the worth of life; it is an unending occupation.

In the Son of Man God revealed the gathered glories of his universe—forever denying that dualism which has been the bane of civilization, the foe of philosophy, and the sorrow of religion; revealing the eternal and essential oneness of the universe; teaching us that to be perfectly spiritual is also to be perfectly natural, and that to be truly human is to be divine. Christ is the best that God can be and do for man; the completest expression of God's thought, the perfect utterance of God's love; the Word of God made flesh. In Christ is

revealed all that God is, and all that man is to be; he is God in man and man in God. The character of Christ is the wealth of God poured into the soul of humanity that it might become rich like God. Christ is the Infinite Love suffering and sacrificing itself to save its lost and self-helpless offspring. He is the Infinite Life stooping down to embrace and impart itself to the finite, that it, too, might become infinite. He is the Infinite Healer, opening the arteries of a vitiated race with the instrument of the cross, and pouring therein the blood of God, that the race might be renewed with the health of God. He is the Infinite Truth, which cannot be defined with words, nor confined in religious formulas; but is forever shattering earth's systems in its growth in human thought, and breaking the bonds which bind men to the temporal and the sensual. His perfect submission to the Father's will and perfect sacrifice in the service of man is the way along which the earth is to climb into the eternities. Humanity can be no more than it will permit

the Christ to be to it, and in it, and through it. The worth or permanence of any man's life is just according to the measure of the Christ-life he receives. Character, individual, social, or political, without Christ is a vain and destructive imagination. There is no genuine morality that is not the outfruit of the inflowing Christ-life. *Self-righteousness is atheism*—in the soul, in the market, in the church, in the state. Whatsoever part of our lives, whatsoever sphere of human activity, is not vitalized with the Christ, and baptized with his redemptive purpose, belongs to the waste of the universe, to be consumed in the quenchless flame of God's passionate purity.

Christ is living and toiling in the world to-day, revealing his glory and manifesting his power, inestimably more than when he traveled the Judean hills and dwelt in the Galilean cities. He lives and speaks and reigns through the Holy Spirit, and is more immanent than the air we breathe. He is always coming in the events of our lives, in the crises of time, silently as the sun's rays,

secretly as the thief at night; coming in and upon us unawares, inspiring our thoughts, speaking with our words, directing our deeds, thwarting our plans, and molding our destinies in ways to us unknown. And thus will he continue coming, and continue to reveal himself, and continue to reconcile men to God, till the end of the ages of his redemptive mission. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all.

In a large sense, in its most complex spheres of thought and important activities, the world has not yet found the Christ. And the discovery of Christ is the need of our times. It is the urgency of the day that Christ's disciples shall discover and reveal him in new and larger relations to human society. Beneath the crustal selfishness of our civilization, beneath the awful peace of this second Augustan age, there is the rumble of uprising revolutions, which threaten to disrupt society and engulf na-

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tions. A dreadful and prophetic unrest possesses the breast of the earth. The insurging woes of centuries of wrong are swelling the great heart of humanity. There is converging a movement of divine impulses in the race, mighty and not to be suppressed. Divine voices are beginning to speak, which cannot be muffled. The Lord ariseth to shake terribly the earth. The Spirit travails with the birth of a new Pentecost—though there may be the preparation of a new Crucifixion. There is a new Apocalypse in the heavens, and the Messianic glory of the Future is streaming in to light up the problems of the Present. The serving peoples of the earth are holding in their fury with the reins of a Messianic hope. The search for some complete law of justice between man and man, the search for remedies for social ills, is essentially a search after the Christ. In its blind gropings after brotherhood, the race is stumbling into the Light of the World. Humanity is hungering for the bread of life, pure, and unadulterated with the poison of theological selfishness,

and Christ is bidding the disciples to break and distribute to the multitudes. The master opportunity of Christendom is at hand to magnify the Lord Christ as the Life and Light of the world, and the King whose right it is to reign in every affair of individual and associated men. The trumpet of God is sounding down along all the lines of human thought for men who shall be quick to discern the signs of the times, and swift to make ready the way of the Lord. The age's divine necessity is apostles who, from amidst the darkness of the perplexities of our modern civilization, shall catch wider and mightier visions of the Christ, and shall speed with divine eagerness and undaunted conviction to declare unto the institutions of men, We have found the Messias! Christ is more than the world has suspected; his salvation is more genuine than the church has admitted; and by a fuller comprehension of his regal Saviourship, and pure interpretation and fearless proclamation of *him crucified*, are the malignant ailments of society to be cured. This is the work

Christ's disciples dare not delay nor trifle with. They are not divinely sent to conform their thinking and speaking to a creed, nor prove a book, nor prop up the throne of God, nor support an ecclesiasticism; but to exalt Christ, and subdue all things unto him.

Theology must find Christ. That theology which finds a fuller revelation of God in Augustus Cæsar than in Jesus Christ is no longer answerable to the needs of the Christian intellect. Plato, Augustine, and Calvin have rendered the church noble and immortal service in molding its truth and strengthening its thought. But Christ waits to do it a better service; he would gospelize the church doctrines; he would have theology born again, and show it the Father. The skepticism of orthodoxy is manifest in its persistent refusal to accept Christ as a full revelation of God; in its setting forth Christ as a protection from God rather than an unveiling of the divine character; in its interpretation of the cross as the arbitrated ground of escape from an abstract and unreal justice instead of an expression of the forgiveness

which is always in the Father-heart, and is always searching out men and bringing them to the judgment-seat of mercy. If God is anywise different from what he revealed himself to be in Jesus Christ, then in seeing Christ we do not see the Father; Christianity is not the final religion; Christ is not the perfect Light of the world; and we are yet in partial darkness. If the justice of the Throne is anything other than the love of the cross then there is no Atonement.

It is moral superficialness to decry the study of theology. There can be no social system not based upon theological conceptions. The springs of human virtue are all in God, and flow into men through their conceptions of the divine character. The character of humanity will come to be just what the race conceives to be the character of God. A selfish God on the throne of human thought, existing, creating, redeeming, for his own glory, means an earthly civilization of "organized selfishness." One of the hugest tricks Satan ever played upon men was in getting them to adopt the libelous concep-

tion of a self-glorifying God as theological truth; for it is the ground of the most arrogant falsehoods, and subtlest and cruelest forms of wickedness, that dominate society. The realization of the kingdom of heaven on earth, which the church prays for in form yet resents in spirit and deed more than all else, can never come through the old theological conception of God. Only through the human apprehension of God *in Christ* will the race enter into that blessed oneness with God which is the inspiration of prophecy and the completion of redemption. The ancient dream of world-wide brotherhood will be fulfilled in the perfect realization of God's Christ-revealed Fatherhood.

The cross is the expression of self-giving as the glory of God's being. All God is and has he gives. He creates and redeems to glorify others than himself. God did not save humanity *for* himself, but *with* himself. Let men once read the sign of the cross in the fullness of its meaning; let them grasp the principle of self-giving as the glory of character human and divine; let them see

what crude caricatures are all our notions of justice as something else than love; let them yield to the fusing flame of the divine love reaching out from the cross; and God and man will meet on a common ground of understanding and action, and share in a common glory, and move with a common freedom, and overflow with a common happiness; and there will be a new dispensation on the earth. And on the ground of this vital apprehension of God, under the sway of his mighty Spirit, they which believe shall have all things in common; and the strong in power, in intellect, in purse, in knowledge of the truth, shall nevermore subject the weak unto themselves; but they shall be the servants of the weak, as Almighty Christ is their servant.

The visible church must find in Christ a more sufficient Saviour. The religious thought of the past has rightly emphasized the utter nothingness of man apart from God. The religious teaching of the future must give emphasis to the equal truth of the moral mightiness of the Christ-possessed man. Christ is the revelation of man as well as God.

He is God's idea of a man. He is the divine prophecy of the divine humanity which the Holy Spirit is mothering into being. He is the Elder Brother of the final family of God. We shall be like him. If there was that in the character of Christ impossible to us; if he, as a human being, was what we cannot be: if he was not tried by everything that tries us, and had spiritual resources which we have not; if we cannot overcome in what he overcame; then he was not a perfect Redeemer, and we are not redeemed. If God does not ask of us what he asked of Christ, and we are not under the same moral obligation Christ was, then the Crucifixion was an awful divine drama whose moral from men is hidden, and we are without any clear revelation of what God expects of us; we walk amidst moral confusion.

But the great barriers which scientific theology has erected in the way of the realization of the Christ-life in men are not to be found in the writings of the apostles, nor words of the Lord. And the religious thought which denies that the redemption of Christ is not

purposed and sufficient to save us from actual sinning, here upon the earth, amidst human conditions, will not satisfy the divine craving of the human heart, nor answer the demands of the human conscience. It is an evasion of the gospel; a denial of Christ; a vicious skepticism; a cowardly infidelity. It is the subterfuge behind which we hide from the approaches of God into our souls. It is that moral meanness which substitutes creeds for divine living, and issues anatomies of God and catalogues of his attributes to take the place of holiness, and thinks to purchase the gift of God with convenient bequests of money.

God cannot save mean and selfish men because of the orthodoxy of their beliefs, the respectability of their associations, the propriety of their conduct. Salvation is divine-human character;—it was man's rejection of the divine character which tore drops of blood from the Redeemer's heart. Without the divine holiness of character no man shall see God, whether his redemption into holiness requires a moment, or an æon of ages. Not

until the divine flame has consumed the last vestiges of selfishness, licked up the last particles of sin, shall a man see God face to face, glory to glory. And this redemption will proceed just as fully and rapidly as the man's receiving faith reaches forth to the Redeemer. To be fully saved is to be a Christ-man instead of a self-sufficient man; a man in whom the Incarnation is continued, through whom Christ can still be the Saviour of the world, who beseeches men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God; a man who blossoms and fruits with the indwelling Christ, whose daily life centers in others than himself, who in all his earthly relationships, is a vital expression of Christ to brother-men. The redeemed man, the spiritually freed soul, is one who has inwardly recieved the Christ-life as his own. The cross of our salvation is not a contrivance to take the place of character; nor is humanity an experiment. The cross is the vital principle of the universal harmony within which God is drawing the race.

Society must find Christ. The conception of Christ as the Saviour of individuals only is

insufficient for the fulfilling of prophecy or the solution of historic problems. The institutions of men must be saved from sin and paganism as truly as individual souls. Someone has recently said, "The Christian design for the world is not an anarchy of good individuals." Commerce, politics, schools, homes, mines, factories, need Christ's redemption as surely as each man therein occupied. Every man in the world might be a Christian, according to the ecclesiastical conception, and yet the world be wretchedly pagan. A family may be barbarous and unhappy whose every member is a Christian. Commerce controlled by Christian merchants is cruel and life-crushing in its progress, reckoning not that it floats its wares on deep seas of human suffering. A corporation, greedy, godless, vicious in many of its operations, consists of men famous for their piety and benevolence. A nation governed by men of eminent Christian character goes mad with the spoils of unrighteousness. Good people compose a social gathering utterly destructive in its spiritual influence. A church containing

many sincere, teachable, self-sacrificing Christians is as powerless a moral institution in the community as the town pump. The sentiments of men are often sincerely Christian when their *things* are altogether atheistic; when their public and financial practices partake of the morals of the tiger. *Human institutions must be gospelized.* The authority of Jesus extends over the bank, the store, the factory, the railway, as truly as over the individual. A dollar, a lamp post, a game, a school, a legislature needs to be absolutely subject to Christ, needs to be used for the same purpose Christ used his cross, just as certainly as human spirits. The principle of Christ's life must be the principle of the market, the social room, the gas company, the college, the kitchen, the locomotive, the bed room, the club house. They are things none the less bought by the blood of Christ than men and women. They are servants that have no rights above their Master. No being, no thing, no institution, has a moral right to exist for any other purpose, subject to any other principle, than the purpose and

principle which moved Christ up Calvary. We have no rights in ourselves nor our things, that Christ had not in his body. Whatsoever would have been wrong in Christ is wrong in the stock exchange, in a corporation, in a money lender, in a pawn shop, in a church, in a text-book on political economy. The horse has no moral business trotting, the train no moral business speeding on its way, the telegraph no moral business bearing its message, the book no moral business being written or read, the dress no moral business being worn, the dollar no moral business being earned or spent, for any other reason than that for which God raised the cross on Golgotha. That cross is the sign that Christendom has only begun to interpret; the sign which is to heal the world's sin-smitten civilizations. The institutions and possessions of men must be uplifted to God's level of the cross before they can become stable; they must be forever nailed on that cross, sacrificed to the same end that Christ was there sacrificed, before God can bring forth eternal and beneficent order out of the strife and chaos

and sorrow of history, and the deathless hopes of the long, sad ages reach their satisfaction. This is a hard saying to a mammon-enslaved church; and who can receive it! Yet not until the race has achieved the cross can it see to hail the morning of God's new creation with that victorious cry, in which the heart-ache of the centuries shall breathe its last agony, It is finished!

Many shall run to and fro in these days with new legislative schemes and social inventions and political mechanisms and socialistic dreams. Doubtless the Lord will use them to some purpose.

> "Ourselves are full
> Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
> Are but the needful preludes of the truth."

But all social, political and financial remedies not born out of the redemptive heart of God are but new Babel towers, from which men will flee in dispute and confusion to renew their sad and fruitless efforts towards peace and rest. Only by the way of the cross can humanity ascend the skies—Calvary before Olivet. Only through Christ's door

of entire self-renunciation can civilization enter its final rest. God will overturn and overturn, and confuse plan upon plan, until the race shall be knit into one family by the love of Christ Jesus. We have cost God too great a price for him to make incomplete work of our redemption. And when we have ceased our struggles to realize happiness through selfishness, and our puny plans are swallowed up in the deep sweep of God's Spirit, then shall we see the new Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God; and its walls are peace; its foundations righteousness; its law love. And the gates thereof shall in nowise be shut. And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall do him service; and they shall see his face, and his name be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night any more; for the Lord God giveth them light. And they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The state must find Christ. It is not sufficient that the state has Christian citizens.

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We have the spectacle of men Christian in their private spheres who are atheist in politics. And political atheism is the prelude of political anarchy. No historical nation has ever existed for material ends, mainly for the promotion of trade and protection of property, for the levying of taxes, distribution of rewards, and regulation of tariffs, without disrupting its life. The state is by birth a divine organism ; it is the offspring of God. It is as truly the business of the state to have no motive but righteousness as it is God's business. The governments of men have no other moral reason for existing than the reason of the Word's being made flesh. A congress, a legislature, a municipal council, has no moral right to sit for any other business than that for which God sits on his throne. Nor can the state evade its mission by handing it over to the will of the majority. Majorities are no substitute for God. The rule of a majority may be just as vicious and intolerable as the tyranny of Herod, or King John. The state has fallen from its divine origin. The "soul of the state," whose exist-

ence Shakespeare declares, has been seduced by the subtleties of covetousness, and needs regeneration. Except the state believe on Christ it cannot be saved any more than a man. It must repent and be converted, and receive the baptism of the Spirit, before it can become a witness for righteousness. Only as the state walks in the light of the Throne, and accepts the judgments of the Lamb, can it be the minister of justice and peace among men. The strifes of states and sins of their civilizations can be taken away only by the Lamb of God. The life of the state must be hid with Christ in God before it can be manifested with the power that does not wane and the glory that does not fade. The principle of Christ's life must be the principle of the nation's being, if it is not to see death. The state must stand for what Christ and the cross stood—though it does not follow that the state adopt a religious formula, or be under the control of a visible church, or legislate in religious phraseology. Whatsoever would have been wrong in Jesus Christ is wrong in the state. If it would

have been wrong for Christ to protect the strong and rich at the expense of the weak and ignorant and poor, it is wrong in the state; if wrong for Christ to keep a liquor saloon, it is likewise wrong for the state to profit by and protect the saloon. If Christ was sent to seek and save the lost so is the state. If the American people would perpetuate, correct and develop their institutions they must turn from the commercial barbarism of their political mechanics, and from the frightful and impudent moral ignorance of their so-called legislators, and reach forth to realize the life of Christ in the life of the nation. Not in new commercial compacts and larger police powers is the promise of civil justice and industrial freedom, but in a larger and more vital apprehension of Christ.

Christ came as the Redeemer of the earth. not to take us out of the world but to deliver us from the evil therein. His gospel is our preparation for life rather than death—death being but an incident in the Christ-life. He came not to increase the census of heaven but to improve the status of earth's right-

eousness; to get God's will done as freely and gladly on earth as it is done in heaven. A more intelligent study of the Scriptures has revealed that much of what was formerly thought to relate to far remote and distant heavenly spheres really relates to the future society of the earth. The Revelation of John is a mystic panorama of the historical processes of redemption, and the triumphs of the Redeemer, here upon the earth where we now live and are to live. John's rapt imagery is the symbolical description of a humanity that is to become so spiritualized that there shall be a wedding of the earth with heaven—the two to blend in unending harmony. It is upon the earth that God is to set his throne of righteousness, and dwell with us and make us his people. It is upon the earth that God is to vanquish death and banish night, and establish the everlasting communion of saints under the reign of the Prince of Peace.

The realization of heaven upon earth is more than a mystic ideal. It is the crowning fact of history. It is the solid reality with

which God is displacing the insubstantial materialism underlying the rude social structures of human selfishness. It is the sole clear and practical solution of historic problems; problems which exist only because of the blindness of human unbelief. It is the tangible realism which is slowly drawing men from the mire of a gross idealism. It is the adaptation of the political economy of Isaiah and the social philosophy of John. It is the actualization of righteousness; the realization of the gospel. It is the bloom of evolution, and the climax of revolutions. It is the goal of the ages upon which Jesus turned his dying vision, and which has held the faith of the pure and wise, the true and the brave, amidst forgotten defeats and unrecorded sufferings. It is the divine errand upon which white-souled prophets have walked serene through a world ablaze with scorn. It is the issue which is to satisfy the travail of the centuries. It is the quenchless passion which will give no rest to the earth until the justice of love prevails. It is the consummation of all that God has been and done for

man, and all that man has been and done for God. It is the eternal kingdom of the Christ, which is besieging the affairs of men, troubling the foundations of society, and sifting the church as wheat. The pledge of God is behind it, and the victorious forces of the universe are allied in its behalf. The Bible is its written warrant, and the cross its seal which none can break. It may take us with violence, but it advances to conquer! *And the saints shall judge the world!*

The kingdom of the Christ is coming among men as a divine judgment, deep and swift, sudden and unobserved, straightening out the crooked things of the earth. It hurls upon us vast problems, travailing with the destinies of nations and civilizations. And these problems are the judgments of God, separating those who seek the righteousness of his kingdom from those who count the gain of mammon as godliness. And the children of the kingdom shall sell their garments for swords, and their possessions for white horses, and range themselves in joyous and confident battalia, under the leadership of

One who also sitteth upon a white horse, and goeth forth to the victory of righteousness upon the earth.

The morning rays of a new Messianic day, in which judgment must begin at the house of God, and the *rich* have the *gospel* preached to them, are splitting the darkness of social atheism;—an atheism which has been the protection of a blind and deaf materialism, calling itself progress, and madly bearing a chosen people towards spiritual and national destruction.

New discoveries of Christ, larger revelations of his glory, profounder manifestations of his power, are about to be made. But the glory of the Christ is the divine flame that searches, consumes, and purifies. And who may abide the day of his coming?

II

Innocence Suffering for Guilt

"'I have laid my hand upon the cross,' she said. 'The Padre says you are no Christian; but look up for a moment with my eyes, and behold the face of the Man of Sorrows. We are all such as he was—the inheritors of sin; we must all bear and expiate a past which was not ours; there is in all of us . . . a sparkle of the divine. Like him, we must endure for a little while, until morning returns bringing peace. Suffer me to pass on upon my way alone; it is thus that I shall be least lonely, counting for my friend him who is the friend of all the distressed; it is thus I shall be most happy, having taken my farewell of earthly happiness, and willingly accepted sorrow for my portion.'

"I looked at the face of the crucifix, and, though I was no friend to images, and despised that imitative and grimacing art of which it was a rude example, some sense of what the thing implied was carried home to my intelligence. The face looked down upon me with a painful and deadly contraction; but the rays of a glory encircled it, and reminded me that the sacrifice was voluntary. It stood there, crowning the rock, as it still stands on so many highway sides, vainly preaching to passers-by, an emblem of sad and noble truths; that pleasure is not an end, but an accident; that pain is the choice of the magnanimous; that it is best to suffer all things. . . I turned and went down the mountain in silence; and when I looked back for the last time before the wood closed about my path, I saw Olalla still leaning on the crucifix."—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

"Now am I rejoicing in the sufferings on your behalf, and am filling up the deficiencies of the tribulations of the Christ, in my flesh, in behalf of his body, which is the church.—*Paul the Apostle.*

"In so far as ye are having fellowship with the Christ's sufferings, be ye rejoicing, in order that, in the revealing of his glory, ye may rejoice exultingly."—*Peter the Apostle.*

II

Innocence Suffering for Guilt

Him who knew no sin he made sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.—II Cor. 5:21.

NO subject needs more vital and immediate consideration than that of the sacrifice of innocence for guilt. And I am confronted, when I consider how to present my thought, with the difficulty of comprehending any subject that involves the Christ-life, save through profound experience. Great spiritual facts and principles are not apprehended, but generally distorted, by the intellect. Not the clear in head, but the pure in heart, shall see God. It is what we live, rather than what we learn, that we understand. The world by wisdom knows not God. He who

is not a living sacrifice in behalf of his brother-men, who is not an innocent and voluntary sufferer for their sins, for the purpose of bringing the righteousness of God to bear upon their lives, has nothing with which to grasp the doctrine of sacrifice as the principle upon which all Christian work must proceed. One may have a more or less defined idea of how men are saved from sin through Jesus Christ; but only to the measure that Christ's sacrifice is repeated in a soul does it apprehend the value of that sacrifice to the sinning world. We are prepared to profit by the cross when our wills have been nailed upon it; and glory in the death of Christ when the self in us has been put to death.

The sacrifice of innocence for guilt is the profoundest truth which God has ever exemplified in a human life. Yet not mere truth but duty, not theology but practice, is the end of revelation. Truth is not revealed or uttered, by prophets, Saviour, or apostles, for truth's sake; but always for upbuilding in righteousness. There is no more dangerous falsehood abroad than the assertion that

truth should be sought for its own sake. This falsehood is the ground of the fact that much of modern sermon-preaching and hearing are largely useless in the accomplishment of their divinely intended redemptive purpose. They degrade the pulpit and deceive the church. Our churches are clogged with people who congratulate themselves on their privileges of worship, their opportunities for hearing the truth clearly explained and ably defended. Yet a vast deal of this truth-seeking and hearing is an intellectual voluptuousness, a spiritual self-gratification, a selfish indulgence of pleasurable emotions, just as deadly to the soul as bodily sensualism. It is as truly immoral to seek truth out of mere love of knowing it as it is to seek money out of love to gain. Truth sought for truth's sake is an intellectual vice; it is spiritual coveteousness. It is an idolatry—setting up the worship of abstractions and generalities in the place of the living God. Truth is valuable to the degree that it makes us true. Truth that is not utilized as the divine energy of one's being, that is not converted into

aggressive goodness, is a smiting curse. Truths not taken into the soul as fuel for the Spirit of God to kindle into a burning enthusiasm for service, are as virtueless in character-building and spiritual-empowering qualities as so many bricks. Farther, it is ruinous to have our good impulses quickened by truth as it is manifested in the sacrificial life and death of Jesus, and then allow those impulses to die without being wrought out in divine being and doing. The knowledge that Christ sacrificed himself in our behalf will rise up in judgment as our condemnation if we evade sacrificing ourselves for the same end for which he offered up his life.

This was Paul's thought in presenting Christ as having been made sin on our behalf —that we should be moved and strengthened to give ourselves as sin to our brother-men, in order to become the carriers of the righteousness of God into their lives; so that we should nevermore live unto ourselves, but become living reproductions of Christ—beseeching men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, commending the truth to their

consciences by manifesting it in our living. The truth, according to Paul, is not given us as a spiritual luxury, enabling the soul to take its ease, but to exalt Christ as the Saviour of men, and subdue the earth in his name; and when we use it simply to gratify, comfort and assure ourselves, we are untrue to God's trust in us, and embezzlers of divine blessings. Though we have all knowledge, and know all divine mysteries, and have faith enough to remove mountains, and have not Christ's love for men, our knowledge and faith are profitless, save to Satan. To grasp the truth, and every possession and power of body and soul, every business and social relationship, and make each witness for Christ's presence and power in our lives—making Christ so glorious that men shall be won to seek the Lord who can so transform our characters and activities,—this is the vital thought of all Paul's epistles. The joy of living, to him, was in converging every fact and energy and pursuit into a faithful and glowing tribute to the Saviourship of Jesus. To show men their utter need of Christ, and reveal in

our lives his all-sufficiency, should be the prompting, the thought, of all our searching after truth, or seeking of whatsoever sort. And it was the master inspiration of Paul's ministry that every man who submitted with Christ to an absolute crucifixion to all self-interest, so that he should nevermore seek his own, but that the saving will of God toward men might be done in him, became a fresh appearing of Christ, a reincarnation of God in the life of the race. Before all men the great apostle set this enlargement and continuation of the Christ-life in humanity as the business of life, to which all earthly affairs were to be regarded as tributary. It never dawned upon Paul, as the church has strangely deduced from his letters, that Christ's submission to the will of the Father was something to take the place of his own submission, to the point of utter self-dying. According to his thinking, no Christian is fully consecrated in whose spirit the sufferings of Christ for men are not repeated. It was along this line of thought that Paul marched up to the point of setting forth Christ as the victim of

human sin. He was pressing upon the Corinthians the urgency of entire self-renunciation in the service of men; and he set forth the sacrifice of Christ as the motive thereto.

Let us, now, in considering how and why Christ was made sin in our behalf, divest our minds of any legal or arithmetical notions of Paul's meaning. We cannot figure our way into the deep things of God; they are the gifts of love to love; we learn and receive to the depth of our love. And love cannot conceive, nor does the apostle mean, that God exacted from Jesus any penalty merited by human sin. For God to punish Christ for our sins would be infinite wickedness, and would not make us a whit the better. If such a conception of our relation to God in Christ were true, if Christ's entire obedience and perfect goodness are meant to take the place of our own obedience and goodness, then our redemption is an infinite fiction which God has conceived for his own self-gratification, and we are not saved; our salvation is a pretense on God's part and an illusion on our own. According to such a notion, also, God

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never forgave our sins, but simply took the penalty they merited out of Jesus Christ; and thus God requires us to be immeasurably better than himself when he bids us forgive unto the uttermost—himself exacting what a Roman would call justice to the last drop, and forgiving nothing. This entirely pagan conception of God is violent to the spirit of the Scriptures; was entirely foreign to the minds of the Apostles, and is the church's inheritance from the Gnostic philosophy which has been so baneful an alloy in Christian theology.

This misinterpretation of Paul's thought, which so wrongs the character of God, and criminates God for the creation of man—making any real redemption an impossibility,—is the fruit of our regarding God as something different, or more, than we see him to be in Christ. There was no conflict between God and Christ—God representing justice and Christ mercy. He that sees Christ sees the Father; they were working in the sphere of redemption, in perfect harmony. Our Lord did not represent merely

one phase of God's character; he was God's character bodily; a revelation of the wholeness, an incarnation of the fullness, of God. He did not come to defend us from God; *he came as God.* Christ was all of God poured into humanity. It is *God* who is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, with a love that is free and besieging; a love that needs no bribing, nor buying; a love that seeks those who reject and crucify it; a love that conditions itself upon nothing save human reception, and forgives and saves all who repent, without legal proceedings and without price. God manifests *his* justice, through Christ, in the forgiveness of our sins. The justice of God on the Throne of the universe is precisely the same thing as the love of Christ on the cross. We involve ourselves in hopeless spiritual confusion when we get to thinking of God's character as one thing, and Christ's as another. And theology has led us much astray in our conduct, and twisted our religious thinking all awry, by assuming that there is more of the divine character than is revealed in Christ.

An untaught yet responsive soul, reading the gospels for the first time, would never dream of relating the Crucifixion to some process of justice, or think of it as the fulfillment of a contract. He would see in it only the vast expression of an all-suffering and all-sacrificing love. He would see God, in the fullness and agony of his love for his ungrateful and wayward children, becoming the victim of their wickedness, that he might reach them with his forgiveness, win them back to himself, and recreate them in righteousness. He would see the great heart of the Father laid bare, the being of God unveiled; and he would never think of saying, as did none of the Apostles, God is justice; but, God is love.

Christ, then, was God, in the human race suffering the consequences of its sin, that he might become the righteousness of its life. The coming of the Christ into humanity was not only *because* of human sin, *but also in spite of it.* God had all along been getting into the race, moving straight upon the drawn swords of human rebellion, coming

nearer and deeper century by century, until he found Jesus, his well-beloved Son, who was so emptied of self, that God poured into him all the glory and power of his infinite character, and at last made humanity at one with himself by himself becoming one with it—lifting our fallen manhood to his Throne by taking it on himself. The Atonement is the issue of the Incarnation. Its ground is the character of God. It is the inhabiting Word that redeems, transmutes and glorifies the flesh.

God would have rejoiced to save us without the Crucifixion. He had never rejected man, but man had rejected him. It would have been easier for God to have compromised with Satan, and saved us is some exterior way, by some transcendent, legal method. But the divine nature could be satisfied with nothing less than a *real* salvation of man. To satisfy the divine holiness we must become walking bodies of God's goodness—living specimens of God unto the world. And there was no way in which God could save humanity, bringing it into oneness

with his own character, except by coming into it—becoming one of the race, cleansing it with his blood. So, in Jesus Christ, we see God confronting and entering and enclosing the great mass of human wickedness, which he alone could overcome by pushing it out with the anguish of his own incoming by the way of the cross; breaking the enslaving bonds of our sins by the inworking and suffering passion of his own goodness. God had, in a sense, to lose himself in humanity, that he might find his life, at last, in a Christ-imaged and well-pleasing race of sons, reflecting the glory of his character as a mirror, responsive to his love with the perfect trust that is born of obedience.

Now, the cross was the resistance God encountered on his way into our lives; the price with which God, who gives all he is and has without price, paid for our spirits and bodies. The cross was the weapon of human selfishness, thrusting through the heart of God in his advance upon humanity with the outreaching and encircling arms of his saving love. We pierced the hands stretched forth

to save us, and broke the heart that pitied even our hardness. We smote the body given for us, and crucified the divine Forgiver who sought us in our hiding places of death, exposed to us our shame, and brought us face to face with his glory. We mocked the love that sought to be beaten with our stripes, bruised with our iniquities, inflicted with our inflictions; the love that came to bleed with our wounds, feel the shame of our sin, and bear the grief of our woe. And thus the cross of man's cruelest hatred becomes the divinest symbol of God's love. The most pitiless weapon of human selfishness is made the profoundest expression of infinite pity, and the mightiest instrument of infinite unselfishness. The cross which stands for the inhumanity of sin is revealed as the principle upon which the love of God proceeds in the humanizing of men by their redemption from sin.

And we can in nowise now reckon the cost to God of loving and redeeming us. We are staggered, sometimes, at the awfulness of human sufferings, and the intensity of human

passions. Yet these passions are but weak and distorted shadows of the passionateness of God, who has, in truth, suffered more from human sin than all the race together—suffering from the beginning; counting the cost before creation; slaying the Lamb from the foundation of the world. Even the good we do for him, in serving one another, is more expensive to God than to do that good himself. He lays upon us the responsibility and blesses us with the privilege of doing, that we may not perish in barrenness, and harden in selfishness, but grow to love as he loves, and live for what he lives.

Thinking of the divine sufferings as they are revealed in Jesus Christ—what was there that Christ did not suffer from the sin of man? There was the agony perfect goodness always suffers in the presence of evil: purity bleeds in the presence of vileness; suspiciousness is an unspeakable grief to the trustful; greed stings the unselfish soul like a serpent; covetousness wounds the self-crucified to the quick; indifference to the welfare of others stuns enthusiasm for good-

ness like a bludgeon of lead; ingratitude is a sword of anguish to the life that spends its all in loving and serving; strife is a knife of infliction to the peace-seeking; the more highly wrought and diviner a soul, the profounder and keener its sufferings from the wickedness of the wicked. Then, the utter spiritual isolation of Christ, amidst the gross and selfish religious conceptions of the world, was hideous darkness to his soul. And there must have been times when he felt the spiritual hardness round about Jerusalem until the very air he breathed seemed saturated and suffocating with cruelty. While no one ever so hungered for human sympathy as Jesus, no one was ever so misunderstood—even down to the present day—by his own disciples, his own church. No one ever so yearned to express his affection; so longed and tried to explain himself and his mission. Yet his own mother understood him not; his brethren did not believe in him; every human companion seems to have been a broken reed piercing him to the heart; his disciples, until the day of his death, were

loyal mainly from selfish motives; a disciple whose feet he had washed betrayed him; the sturdiest of them all denied him; they all forsook him and fled; the multitudes who had felt the healing power of his compassion, the authority of his words, the divineness of his being, and witnessed the miraculous and beneficent demonstrations of his power, shouted for his crucifixion; his own nation rejected him; his own religion crucified him; and thus, he presented himself, the willing victim of our sins, to be rent in soul, mangled in flesh, broken in heart, that he might show us the Father, show us ourselves, and lead us back to our Father's house. He, the Innocent One, took upon himself the pain and shame and grief of our sin, that he might enter our lives with the redeeming righteousness of God, and rend the veil of unbelief that hid us from the Father's face.

And so Christ is our life; apart from him there is desolation; there is death. Christ is God's righteousness; his righteousness is ours. He was the righteousness of God

realized in a man; the goodness of God bodily. He is the same righteousness God offers us; yea, besieges us with his Spirit to gain our acceptance thereof. God wants to realize in *us* his goodness; make *us* living bodies of his righteousness; give us the treasure of Christ's character in our earthen vessels; fill us with the glory and power of the divine nature. It was to bring God's righteousness upon and into our lives that Christ was sent among us, expelling our selfishness, filling us with God—God's goodness rushing in and filling the vacuum left by the expulsion of self-goodness. And just to the measure we receive Christ we receive God. So that it is not a figure, or an imputation, Paul puts before us in saying we are made the righteousness of God in Christ; but the profoundest fact of human experience. Christ's errand was to carry this righteousness of God into our beings. Our business on earth, among men, is to be the righteousness of God embodied, with hearts, brains, hands, tongues, and feet. To this end are we born into the world.

Of course, Christ is not our righteousness in any external sense; he is our righteousness, not in himself, but in ourselves. He is not our righteousness any more than we let him into the possession of our souls. And he cannot possess us from without. His sacrifice cannot take the place of our divine call to sacrifice. God will not accept his obedience as an apology for our disobedience; his love as the justification of our selfishness. Neither is his character a mere object lesson; something for us to look at in spiritual wonderment; something to influence us by its objective power and beauty. Christ can be good in no man's stead; nor is there any imitation of Christ. His Atonement is neither a legal, nor a moral, fiction. *The Atonement is a reality.* It is the real coming of God into humanity, a recreation, a regeneration, of the race from within. It is the indwelling of God in the soul. Hence, Christ is not our goodness any more than we allow him to make us good. He is not our Saviour any more than we trust him to make us like himself. As much of his righteousness is ours

as we receive and work out in divine living, in Christly characters—no more. Christ's being made sin avails us nonesoever unless it transmutes us into loving, breathing, toiling bodies of God's righteousness. His sacrifice in our behalf avails us no more than it actually results in our being made the righteousness of God. And he will give us divine characters to the depth of our faith; he will make us as much like himself as we are willing to be made. We thus present Christ to God, not as our subterfuge, but as the Mediator in whom we have seen the face of God, and the glory of a God-possessed man. We present him to God as the goal of our faith, the crown of our hopes, the strength of our purposes. We accept Christ as God; and God accepts us as infant christs, who through faith are to be like him who redeems us, and makes us new-born spiritual creatures.

Now, it is urgent that we remember that it is always living innocence that suffers supremely from guilt. The good are always becoming sin for the wicked, and the wicked are becoming the righteousness of God

in the good. There is no growth in the likeness of our Lord where there is no suffering for others' guilt. No soul is positively good who is not entering into the sin, and taking on the sufferings of others, in order to reach them with the Christ-life, which is the righteousness of God. If our Lord's experience is unreal to us, in a subjective sense, we are not the bearers of his cross, nor the partakers of his joy and glory; and we appreciate not what manner of world we dwell in. God is still being crucified in the souls of the saints who are chosen, from among the many who are called, to share with him the blessedness of his sufferings for the redemption of the race. We are bought anew with a price every tick of the clock. Our good impulses are borne into our souls on great billows of sorrow. Every opportunity of ours is born to us out of great travail of spirit somewhere, sometime. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins, no saving of lives, any where, at any time, by any being, by any church. Christ was made sin for humanity. Paul was made sin for Europe. Livingstone

was made sin for Africa. Knox was made sin for Scotland. Edwards and Lincoln were made sin for America. We are made the righteousness of God in the Pilgrim Fathers. The mother is made sin for her children. Every minister who reads his commission in the light of the Throne is made sin for his people—always bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus in his mortal body. There has been no vital faith in Christ, no obedience towards God, that has not involved the sacrifice of self in the service of man. Without vicarious sacrifice, without substitution, there has been no friendship, no love, no moral helpfulness, no saving of souls. The ages when the church has made vast conquests have been the ages of persecution, when the church was bearing away the sin of the world in its body, and shedding its blood for the world's cleansing; when devotion to Christ was the passion of life; when the disciples rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer with the blows aimed at their Lord, and gave their bodies to be the dust of the

highway over which the redeemed should walk into his kingdom.

And the reason the salvation of the world now halts, the reason the population of the world increases faster than the church, notwithstanding the eulogists of the progress of Christianity, and the magnificent machinery of the church, is the unwillingness of the church, which is Christ's body, to be made sin for the sinning world, that the world through it may receive the righteousness of God. The church has accepted Christ's mission, but practically rejected Christ's cross—*the cross having become foolishness, at last to the believing!* It has been overcome by the temptation which Jesus overcame in the wilderness, and is trying to save the world with its kingdoms and glory. But the church can save the world no faster than it sacrifices itself in Christ's stead for the world's redemption. We who are the church are sent to be offerings for sin, and to make intercession for transgressors. White souls have borne along the cross of

our Redeemer from age unto age; and, from out the past, bleeding and appealing hands of consecration are pressing upon us the same cross, to bear it in our lives unto a better age, whitened and strengthend by our crucifixion with Christ. The church can conquer no more than it suffers for whom it would conquer. The church will be potent only to the degree that it conserves the divine doctrine of redemption through substitution as the vital principle of its faith and practice, and tolerates no traditional notions of redemption by proxy to paralyze its faith and defeat its mission. *Salvation by proxy has ended its procession!* Substitution must become the church's method as well as its doctrine; it must be transmuted from a barren theological fiction into the mightiest and most vital of realities, or the church is doomed, not knowing the day of its visitation. The moral manhood of the race is revolting against the church that veils its neglect of the poor and ignorant, its falsity to its divine commission, with pious sentiments; that seeks to put orthodoxy in the

place of brotherhood, and conceal worldliness within social respectability. The time is going by when a luxurious church can uphold the cross as its protection from the wrath of the Lamb against its inhumanity towards man and its infidelity to the gospel. The sword of God is flaming in the sky, beseeching a Peter, or a Luther, to take it and smite the church that thinks to deceive the Holy Ghost with money. And there shall not be one stone left upon another.

The cross of our Redeemer appeals to the church of to-day with a deeper meaning and a diviner emphasis than it seems to apprehend. Are we following Christ for his sake, or mainly for our own sakes; out of devotion to him, or devotion to self? Are we bearing the cross about in crucified lives as a sign of salvation to men, or leaning upon it as a spiritual crutch with which to hobble into the possessions of the Lord? These are questions we cannot evade; they pursue us as divine judgments. They are pregnant with a church and a nation's destiny.

The eyes of God are searching up and

down this iron world of selfishness for men who are great enough to be put to death in self that the life of Christ may be manifested anew. God is pressing for a deeper incarnation of himself in the race. He calls and calls for souls who shall make themselves of no reputation, seek not their own, be not anxious for the morrow's food and property; but who shall spend themselves and possessions in realizing the Christ-life in the world. God waits, and the deliverance of a travailing creation waits, for men who shall take on Christ's yoke of service, and go out of themselves into this great, starving, striving, staggering, doubting humanity, to be beaten with its stripes, bleed with its wounds, stricken, mangled, poor and lonely with its sins, taking no thought of reward, popular churches, or church year-books, in order to become divine righteousness in its life, and Christ-builders of its character; in order to become the strength of God to the weak, the joy of God to the wretched, the wealth of God to the poor.

By all the appealing power of the cross,

by the eternal crucifixion of his Father-heart, by the blood of love which the ages have been pouring out for the cleansing baptism of the earth, by the exhaustless depths of divine mercy, by the need and sorrow of a sinning race, by his quenchless anger at its sin, by the deep voice of his Spirit in our souls, by the holy memories of the past, by the matchless opportunities of the present, by the fateful crises gathering in the future, God entreats the church to come out from its exclusion and selfishness, and be put to death with Christ, that it may arise in the glory of a new resurrection, resistless with the power of a new Pentecost. Then the publicans and sinners will draw near unto the church, and the poor will hear its message gladly, because the church has become the incarnate Christ of God to the world! Then shall the church appear as a bride adorned for her husband, and the redeemed shall be gathered unto the marriage supper of the Lamb!

III

The Growing Christ—
The Dying Self.

"The effort to concentrate all possible excellencies in one's own person is, at bottom, only a 'shining vice;' but true morality consists in the complete surrender of one's own self, and in self-sacrifice for others."—*Hermann Lotze.*

"Oh, Athenians, I esteem and love you, but I shall obey God rather than you; and while I live, and as far as lies in me, I shall never cease philosophizing, or urging and remonstrating with whomsoever I may meet, in the very same terms I have been wont to use."—*Socrates.*

"She made me feel—would that his ministers had made me feel it before, since they say that they believe it—that he had passed victorious through my vilest temptations, that he sympathized with me in every struggle.

"She told me how he, in the first dawn of manhood, full of the dim consciousness of his own power, full of strange yearning presentiments about his own sad and glorious destiny, went up into the wilderness, ... there to be tempted of the devil. She told how alone with the wild beasts, and the brute powers of nature, he saw into the open secret—the mystery of man's twofold life, his kingship over earth, his sonship under God: and conquered in the might of his knowledge. How he was tempted to use his creative powers for selfish uses—to yield to the lust of display and singularity, and to break through those laws which he came to reveal and fulfill—to do one little act of evil, that he might secure thereby the harvest of good which was the object of his life; and how he conquered in the faith that he was the Son of God. She told me how he . . . . . had felt the agony of calumny, misconception, misinterpretation; how he had fought with bigotry and stupidity, casting his pearls before swine, knowing full well what it was to speak to the deaf and the blind; how he had wept over Jerusalem in the bitterness of disappointed patriotism, when he had tried in vain to awaken within a nation of slavish and yet rebellious bigots the consciousness of their glorious calling."—*Charles Kingsley.*

According as the Father sent me forth, I also send you.—The Christ.

III

The Growing Christ — The Dying Self.

He must increase, but I must decrease.—John 3:30.

THE Hebrew John Baptist was made of different stuff from the Greek god Pan, . . . who, coming out to sing to the Arca- . . . dians, took fright at the echo of his own voice, and fled back into the forest depths, never to return. No echo of itself, nor doubt of its message, nor earthly terrors, could affrighten the voice from the wilderness of Judea. Above the best and bravest of the servants of the race, the messenger of the Messiah rises in solitary grandeur, like one of the majestic peaks God lifts above the Sierras and clothes with the

clouds. He was true to the greatest and most perilous trust that God had ever imposed upon a man. He stood undaunted and calmly trustful amidst the mightiest temptations that had ever beset a man's loyalty and faith. He marks the highest reach of human unselfishness.

When Jesus appeared on the scene of John's ministry, the prophet was in the noontide of his popularity. By the sheer force of his character he had mastered public opinion. He had come from his haunts carrying the wilderness and mountains in his soul; and men humbled themselves before such blended massiveness and intensity of manhood. His prophet-garb and manner, and his annunciation of the long-expected King and kingdom, had appealed to Jewish national expectation, and forged it to a white-heat, so that the Baptist could mold it at his will. Herod was jealous; the Pharisees were suspicious and hateful; but the populace believed. A word from John would have kindled the mass of Jewish discontent into a furious flame of revolution. He had but to so announce him-

self, and Judea and Galilee would have hailed him as the Messiah. But not a word does the Baptist turn to personal advantage. In the high-time of his power, he completely disowns himself, sinking his personality in his message, so that men may consider the vast import of his speech and lose sight of the speaker. He will be but the fore-runner heralding the advance of the King. He will be but the opener of the door through which the kingdom of the Christ shall march into the possession of the earth. He turned the attention of the nation, when it centered most fully in himself, to the Lamb of God. When he had become the depositary of the nation's hopes, he greeted the appearing Christ as one whose slave he was not great enough to be.

Slowly, at first, and somewhat disappointedly, the multitudes turned from John to Jesus. The disciples of the Baptist became the disciples of the Christ; John's following grew smaller from week to week. Rich and poor, ignorant and wise, mighty and weak, began to follow Jesus, even into his places

of retirement. Christ grew in the public vision; John sank from out its sight. But, before John was cast into prison, some of his old disciples were grieved at his loss of popular attention; they came to him complaining that the One whom he had baptized, and borne witness to, was also baptizing, and that all men were turning unto him. Then the soul of the Baptist rises up in the magnificence of its unselfishness: "I told you, ye remember, I am not the Christ. I am but as the friend whose rejoicing is not in his own but the bridegroom's joy. My joy is fulfilled in seeing the multitudes leave me and go after the Christ. He must increase, but I must decrease." John, realizing that his work was done, that his remaining among men would only hinder the growth of the Christ in their estimation, speaks his last words as a tribute to Christ's matchless greatness, and then vanishes from the scene of his work. The loneliness of the prison cell and Herod's sword are all that remain to complete the career, and testify to the moral greatness of John the Baptist, whose self-ab-

negation is the regal crown of a masterful character.

John showed no self-concern. His concern was the reputation and reception of the Christ. He felt no neglect in the turning of the people from himself to the Christ. He rejoiced to be forgotten when he learned that the thought of men was absorbed in the Christ. He considered nothing lost to himself that contributed to the enlargement and enrichment and empowerment of the Christ in public attention. He would suffer no shadow of himself to dim the vision of the divine majesty of the Christ in the eyes of the disciples. He would decrease that the Christ might increase. The lessening of John was the enlargement of the Christ. The dying self was the growing Christ. John's greatness was in the glad giving of the whole of himself as a contribution to another's greatness.

A man's ability to die unto himself always measures his likeness to God. We become like God to the measure that we pour all there is of us into others. We take on the

character of God to the degree that we take on his cross—the cross of God's self-giving life. The cross is, in truth, the ground, and only ground, of the Atonement. The cross is the character of God. And we become one with God by partaking of his cross—thus partaking of his character. There is no other way; no other truth; no other life. He that climbeth up some other way is a robber, seeking to get life without death; seeking to break into the kingdom by stealth, rather than let the kingdom enter and possess his life through Christ's way of self-renunciation. Though a man give his days and nights to a search for religious truths, though all his life be spent in seeking God, though all his aspirations and energies are along the line of religious development, if self be the motive of this forth-reaching of his life, he will see God awry, and will sadly misrepresent God to the world through the conformation of his character to his distorted vision. His religious culture appears, indeed, genuine and commendable; but it is, nevertheless, the profoundest curse a man can bring upon himself

and his brothers; it obstructs the advance of God's kingdom more than much of what we call worldliness. There is no other way of reaching the throne of God's righteousness than through the dethronement of self. To seek to be good for self's sake is no better than burglary in its spiritual results. It is as certainly wrong to continually seek God for self's sake as it is to seek money for gain's sake, or the gratification of the flesh for lust's sake—though, it is true, God is able to transmute selfish beginnings into the glory of the divine unselfishness. A soul lives and unfolds after the Christ-image of God, taking on the beauty of the Christ-holiness, just in the proportion that it escapes from the larva of self. Only the self-dead man is the God-alive man. The dying self is the growing Christ.

While spiritual selfishness is selfishness in its primal, final, and deadliest form, selfishness in any form is separation from God and humanity. *It is the origin of evil. The man is a devil who is sufficient unto himself in whatsoever he is or does.* The absolutely independent man has descended to the moral

level of the brutes. Any man can assert his independence; it took the Incarnate God to become the perfectly Humble One, pleasing not himself, taking upon himself the form of a *Servant*. Self-living, of whatever sort, by whatever name we call it, by whatever religious or social philosophy we disguise or defend it, is the essence of sin. It is the outrage against which nature lifts up its voice, and which has desecrated and laid waste the garden of the Lord with hands of violence. The mission of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is to cry out against the wantonness, the imbecility, the inhumanity of selfishness. The impracticability of selfishness is the lesson of history. The eternal hopelessness and helplessness of selfishness is the warning of the Gospel. Selfishness is slavery. It is the bitter bondage of the race to falsehood. Its clanking chains deafen us to the voice of God and the cry of our brothers for help; they beat and bruise and gall the soul in every attempt to rise to the realization of divine ideals. Selfish purposes blast and wither the germs and blossoms of human

nobleness; they are the moths that eat out the divineness of our humanity. And yet they are the giants of evil that battle with Christ for the possession of the soul—Christ increasing as they decrease—Christ advancing over their death. The dying self is the growing Christ—we who live being evermore delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Herein lies the philosophy of Christian growth. The mastery of Christ proceeds through absolution from self. Self must step down and out before Christ can move in and reign. Christ increases as self decreases. We live with the Christ-life to the measure that the self-life dies in Christ. Christ once illustrated this with a grain of wheat. The grain has in it the germ of life—the germ of countless grains—the germ of vast harvest fields; but not until it is buried in the bosom of the earth does it become more than itself. It must die before it can receive and give—decrease that the fruitfulness of the earth may increase. So a human

soul has in it the germ of infinite life. It is divine by nature. Its possibilities of goodness, its resources for spiritual reproductiveness, are measureless and exhaustless. But so long as the soul exists for itself, even in a religious way, God cannot reproduce his Christ in it, and it cannot increase the Christ in humanity. Not until the soul dies to self, hid with Christ in the bosom of God, and begins to receive within itself the spiritual life-forces of the eternities, does it grow with the increase of God's righteousness.

The failure to realize this principle of Christian growth through death unto self is the cause of the barrenness, the joylessness, the lack of vigor and enthusiasm, the spiritual immovability of many of us who profess the Lord Christ as our Saviour. It is also the cause of the blunders and disheartening failures we make in our feeble attempts to reach greater heights of Christian experience. Our spiritual wretchedness springs from our seeking Christ's rest and peace while avoiding his yoke of self-abandonment. And this scheming to get all Christ has to give, with-

out gratefully giving unto him all our beings and doings and havings, is the religious selfishness which is the heart-disease of the church of our day. He who counts on being saved by Christ's crucifixion, without being crucified with Christ in the service of his brother-men, mistakes calculativeness for religion; and will, I am thinking, find his theological scaffolding giving way with a surprising crash in the final judgment. Christ's redemption from sin is real; his righteousness is not a cloak which God has furnished to cover up our sins, but a righteousness to be actualized in our lives through the sacrifice of self in loving and saving the world. The measure of a man's vital faith in Christ, according to the Lord's notion of eternal measurements in the last section of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, is his love for his brothers. Not until self has been altogether and forever surrendered to Christ, to be poured back into the world as a stream of life-giving love, does a human soul rise to the heights where Jesus walked, omnipotent with the divine life, mastered by the divine

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peace, the triumph of God is the soul complete. Not until a soul becomes the slave of Christ does it live with the freedom of God.

The attitude of the Baptist is the realization of the only worthy and enduring Christian motive. The vital thought of all Christian discipleship should be the continuation and enlargement, the exaltation and supremacy, of Christ in the life of the world. Not self, but Christ, should be the goal of all our religious culture. The devoted disciple will be blind to self in his ever-growing vision of the Lord. Indeed, there is no other honorable attitude which the redeemed can assume towards their Redeemer. We are the spiritual creations of the infinite Christ-life. We are the subjects of an eternal Atonement. We are swathed in the infinite pity of the Christ-love. We have not an inch of spiritual standing-ground save the mercy of God revealed in Christ. We are redeemed with his fathomless sufferings. We are the heirs of his exhaustless grace. Our weakness is upborne and infolded by the almighty strength of his tenderness. He brings to us,

as a gift, all the elements that make up the character of God. And, withal, it is his unwearying hand that arrests and wrenches us from awful abysses of spiritual destruction, invisible to our blindness. All in us that is eternal is what there is in us of Christ. The growing Christian is essentially the growing Christ. And no life, had it the earth with its ages in hand, could, by the consecration of all, give any comprehensive expression of the gratitude it should cherish for the gift of God in Christ. Hence the moving, abiding, solemn thought of our Christian experience should be: not, am I growing better or worse, in and for myself; but, am I increasing the influence, the reputation, the saving life of Christ among men? Not what I am, but what I show Christ to be, should be the end of all Christian aspiration. Christ is, to the world, largely what the Christian is—Christ increasing or decreasing according as Christians manifest him in their being and doing. We, the church, says Paul, are Christ's body. We are genuinely Christian, then, to the extent that we

are Christ in all our earthly relationships. And it is a momentous thought, that just to the degree that we are less Christ-like than it is our privilege to be, to the extent that we fail to fulfill all our possibilities of goodness and grasp all of our opportunities for service, to the measure that we go without all the Holy Ghost power, God promises to the receptive, we misrepresent Christ to men and stand between Christ and the subjection of the world. And the baptism of the Spirit of God is more than a privilege. The failure to receive and retain it is the perilous neglect of the great salvation against which the apostolic writer warns the Hebrew Christians.

The manifestation of our devotion to Christ is in our love for humanity. And our brother-men will seem very different from what they have seemed when we come to look at them through love's eyes. Love is a great leveler. When soul faces soul in God's great court of love, the petty distinctions which have hitherto separated them evanish. It is, in truth, marvelous how silly

and penetrable are the barriers of clothes, culture, creed, wealth, manners, and so on, that have seemed insurmountable in the way of men realizing their brotherhood in God. When soul draws near to soul around the cross, how heart leaps forth to heart; how hand feels about for hand; how love streams, like the light of God, from face unto face, how the things that barricade man against man are seen to be so cheap and shameful in the stupendous reality of a life which images God and is the best work of God's creative genius! When love focuses the vision, greasy savages, ragged vagabonds, filthy children of the slums, wild-hearted women who live by sin, the snake-eating pigmy of the African forest, disfigured men in the tortures of appetite, the juiceless religious zealot whose heart seems as loveless as his creed, the slave of greed whose covetousness would convert the very kingdom of God into a sub-structure for his selfish interests—all are seen to be touched with a sacredness, and are viewed with reverence as God's living temples whose ruins his redeeming grace can restore;

the blood of God is still in their veins, and the thread of their divine ancestry is not wholly lost. We see, sometimes, in the vilest of men the workings and travailings of a divine life, touching them with a divine dignity, and leaving marks of a divine beauty. Yet more; there are strange times when a sudden crisis shivers the wrecks of sin and folly from which some soul thought lost has long been struggling to emerge; the crisis bears to the soul, through the scattered ruins, some deep call to service; and lo! for one prophetic moment, the Christ appears! And our faith takes wings and bears us on through the ages of redemption, till we pause, in awful rapture, to see and dimly understand what John saw and knew: We shall be like him—the Christ! The anointing we have received of him shall be full and abiding.

There is no love for Christ, there is no vital faith in him, there is no realization of him in the human life, that does not manifest itself in the loving sacrifice of self in the service of man. And the attitude of despair, distrust, contempt towards one's brother-man is essen-

tially pagan; it is Pharisaical. The Roman disdained the rabble; so did the Greek; so did the Pharisee. And the scorn of the pagan, the scorn of the hypocritical Pharisee, is in the heart of the Christian who, in the conceit of superior knowledge of truth, or pressure of personal interests, or pride of social position, or possession of material things, withdraws from loving, life-giving contact with his less wise, less favored, less religious fellow-men.

When Jesus saw the multitudes he had compassion on them, as sheep having no shepherd. He made his home among them —unlike the rich and cultured disciples who seek the fashionable avenues for their churches and homes. The common people heard him gladly when the cultured and comfortable treated him with malignant scorn. He saw in all men images of God—broken and defaced; but they were yet images that grace could restore. He faced a race of prodigal sons; but they were still sons. He saw blinded eyes; but he opened them. He saw vile men and fallen women; but he loved

and saved them. He saw jealous, greedy, scheming, blundering disciples; but he stilled them with his peace and conquered them with his character. He met the hard, unreasoning religious bigot, who always uses the truth as a weapon of strife and cruelty, rather than a torch of love; but he saw that even in the bigot's heart was some spark of love that would yet revive under the quickening breath of God. He looked into the eyes of the low, sordid slaves of money, who could see nothing better in the world than the arena of clashing self-interests; but back of the greed he saw and called forth mighty moral possibilities, the germs of spiritual beauty, the early movements of vast heroic powers—tearing the soul in their struggles to break through its selfishness and reverse its habits of thought and action.

He who was crucified in the world's behalf loved and trusted men more than all others. And the race has always been loved most by those who have suffered most at its hands. Those hearts which are richest with the sympathy that helps and heals, God takes into

his own hands and presses their preciousness into the cup of Christ, which he is forever passing to the earth as the remedy for all its ills. The hearts that are profoundest with the power to love, he baptises with Christ's baptism, that they may love purely and unselfishly. We cannot manifest the love of Christ toward men, in our lives, apart from suffering and sacrifice in their behalf. The luminous path of our Lord, while it issues in the throne of God, will lead us through wildernesses, through Gethsemanes, and across Calvaries. But, if we follow on to do his bidding, continuing his saving, loving life in our words and deeds, the light of love will never go out to leave us in the darkness and misery of selfishness. And our characters will unfold in perennial bloom with the beauty of God's holiness.

The life of fret and friction, failure and bondage, because lived for self, is transmuted into a song of joy, when it comes under the mastery of the redemptive purpose of Christ. It passes from a sphere of religious drudgery to one of infinite freedom, and exhaustless

vigor. When we come to be absolved from self through devotion to Christ, letting him into the blessed possession of the *whole* life, willing to be nothing in self and for self, that he may manifest himself through us as Saviour to our brother-men, we shall then be so absorbed in doing Christ's compassionate deeds, so engaged upon his errand of love, that we shall have small time to spend in the self-seeking that consumes so much strength that should be given to service; we shall be so thoughtful in opening doors into larger and better futures for others that we shall not be anxious about ourselves; we shall not fret about what people think of us because our supreme concern will be, what they think of Christ—glad to be forgotten that Christ may be remembered, grow smaller in others' estimation that Christ may grow larger, decrease in the sight of men that Christ may increase. If we are ruled by a purpose to make Christ glorious in the world's eyes, enlarge his authority in the world's work, increase his worth in the world's thought, we shall not

worry about what or where we are, what we have or have not—losing sight of self in our transfixing vision of the Lord—honoring him with a faith that asks not to see, and a peace triumphant over all our sufferings and vexations; we shall take care of our minds and bodies, dissipating the strength of neither in any sort of self-indulgence, because they are Christ's; mere trifles will become to us eternities; everything we touch, and all that touches us, will acquire a sacredness in our thoughts; everything without will speak to us a divine message, and gleam with the light of divine purpose, because the divine Christ-life is within; we shall be glad to be humble messengers preparing the way of the Lord into other lives, grateful, with Mrs. Browning, "to stand and work among Christ's little ones and be content;" we shall not dim the world's vision of the Lord with the darkness of our own selfishness, but reflect his glory with the unselfishness of our devotion to his Person and his work. When Christ becomes the *Soul* of our activities, we shall go to and fro upon our daily tasks, finding in each a

burning bush aflame with God, because there is nothing but God's holy ground to walk upon; our homes and markets, our courts and schools, our factories and counting-rooms, will all be holy places; the whole earth will become to us a sanctuary of worship, because the altar of the cross has been raised upon it, and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world offered thereupon as our sacrifice —because the voice of the Lord has spoken in this sanctuary, and his glory has been seen therein—because he is toiling on at its completion, building it with the strength of his grace, rejoicing with his mighty love.

The gospel of Christ is not a *system* of truth; Christ knew nothing of systematic theology, any more than the lily measures the distance through which the sunlight travels to unfold its life. The most withering woes of the meek and lowly Lord were hurled upon heads that had the clearest intellectual religous conceptions. According to the gospel, life precedes knowledge; love leads into truth; spiritual facts are discovered by spiritual experience. And it is not the

critical, conservative and intellectual forces that are making the history of the kingdom of God, but consecrated and concentrated passion. The Apostles did not first know in *what*, but in *Whom*, they believed. Christianity, in its purity, is devotion to a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ; by which devotion all truth is apprehended, all power is received. Spiritual truth is the Christ-light shining upon and in the life of men—immeasurable as God. And if our Christianity is not doing with the truth what Christ did when he walked the soil of our earth, it is not genuine; its creeds are but the dungeons of our souls; its gorgeous temples but prisons wherein we confine the Christ from prevailing over the earth; its sermons, so theologically proper, so flattering to saints present by eulogies of saints past, are but funeral mummeries over the Christ whom the church has crucified and tombed anew; and its rich music is but a spiritual voluptuousness. And the soul of God wearies with the preformances and offerings of an imitation Christianity. And think not, O,

Church! to say within thyself, we have Calvin for our father: God is able out of these stones to raise up children who shall cry aloud the name of His Christ!

Devotion to Christ is the need of the church, a devotion that shall be passionate, like that of John the Baptist and Paul, Peter and John the beloved, transmuting the Christian from the sphere of duty into the realm of love; a devotion that shall be proud to wear Christ's bonds, and nail its hopes upon Christ's cross; a devotion that shall hold as unspeakably precious the privilege of being true to Christ, of consuming one's life and possessions in his service. And a life-mastering devotion to Jesus Christ, working itself out in a joyous passion for humanity, is the most glorious exhibition of manhood the world is ever privileged to witness. It is the divine enthusiasm which alone can conquer the world for God. It is the *Holy* Spirit which is creating the new world. When the church is vital with this Spirit, it is aggressive; it is resistless. When it assumes the defensive, and becomes simply a school of Christian culture, a society for worship, it

is conquered; and it has betrayed its Lord.

The annointing of God is pent up, waiting for the church that shall be his Christ unto men; a church that shall be Christ to the poor, going down among them with the gospel; a church that shall be Christ unto the Pharisees and the plunderers of the poor, hurling upon them the eternal woes of God against covetousness and hypocrisy; a church that shall be the aggressor in every crusade against iniquity, in the individual, in the state, in society; a church that shall not barter the armor of God for splendid garments, nor follow the fashionable along the city streets, but shall part with its garments for swords of resistless holiness, and be made of no reputation, that it may save men; a church willing to be despised and rejected by the rich rather than put Christ to an open shame by gilding his cross with the gold of mammon; a church that shall be known by its fruits as the protector and burden-bearer of the weak, rather than the excuser and defender of their oppressors; a church that shall not build "palaces in which to sit at ease,

sheltered from the shock of battle," but shall march in swift and sanctified battalions to rescue the suffering and sinning and needy, and storm the fortresses of unrighteousness, and put to flight the insolent powers of mammon; *a church that shall be Pentecosted with the enthusiasm of God for righteousness*, jubilant and confident with the spiritual chivalry of the Apostles, before whose advance devils shall cry out with fear and rage, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; a church glorious with a supreme devotement to Jesus Christ, and seized and driven to conquest by the passion of Christ's love for humanity!

In the day of vengeance which is in God's heart, in the day of his redeemed which draws near, when the eyes of men shall be opened to discern between the righteous and the wicked, the church which fulfills the divine need shall be God's peculiar treasure. He shall spare it, as he spared his own Son, for the turning of the hearts of the children to the Father; for the anointing of his Spirit; for the opening of the eyes of the

blind, and the doors of the prisoners of sin; for the judgeship of the world. But the church that cries peace! when there is no peace, that chiefly conserves the traditions of the elders and eulogizes the prophets it has slain for speaking the truth, that discerns not between the worship of mammon and worship of Christ, shall be trampled under the feet of human scorn, and consumed in the oven of the divine wrath.

The church of mammon shall have the power to mock and crucify the church of the Messiah; but it shall not prevail; it shall be ground to powder. The church of mammon shall be overcome by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of his saints, who love not their lives unto death, but are great enough to be self-failures that the glory of the Christ may fill the earth. Then shall come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for whom we have waited, and in whom we shall rejoice. And we shall cast our crowns before the Crowned One, unto whom every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth; and

we shall sit with him on thrones of righteousness, and reign with him through the ages.

"We see and hail the coming day!
Amidst the din of wars and strifes of men,
The rotting pools of crime and ignorance,
The greedy selfishness that eats and drinks
While brother-men in wolfish famine cry,
His words of faith still ring with steadfast note,
To lead the way to perfect victory!"

IV

The Resurrection of Life.

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"Christ is not come, while there
The men of blood whose crimes affront the skies
Kneel down in act of prayer,
Amid the joyous strains, and when they rise
Go forth, * * * * *
To waste the land in his most holy land.

"Oh, when the day shall break
O'er realms unlearned in warfare's cruel arts,
And all their millions wake
To peaceful tasks performed with loving hearts,
On such a blessed morn,
Well may the nations say that Christ is born."

—*From the Spanish, by William Cullen Bryant.*

"Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

* * * * * *

"Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

"Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace,

"Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be."

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."—*John the Apostle.*

IV

The Resurrection of Life.

Ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, which hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here.—Mark, 16:6.

WE sometimes, in foolish moments, think how rich would be our thought, how . . . strong our faith, how great our ac- . . . tion, if we, like Peter and John, could know Christ in the flesh. Yet there is no one of us that has not a vaster and better opportunity for knowing the Lord's character and mission than had any of the apostles, before the resurrection. Their conceptions of Christ as the Saviour, before they had received the illumination of the Spirit, were rude and material. And the doctrinal portions of the New Testament, which unfold the person and work of Christ,

were written after long years of prayer, and toil, and brooding thought. They were a growth—the divine fruit of profound religious culture. The apostles were spiritual specialists. They discovered great religious truths, they gathered eternal facts, one at a time. Their knowledge came, as must ours, if it be vital, through personal companionship with Christ, and experience in his blessed service. And we of to-day have not only the fruits of apostolic learning and consecration, but also the heritage of ages of toil and study and prayer which the apostles had not. They walked in the dawn-light; the Sun of Righteousness is now high in the heavens. The Light of the World is not dimmed with burning, nor with age. The waft of the centuries has only intensified its brightness.

With the possible exception of John, it is evident that the disciples had no expectation of the Lord's resurrection. It came to them as more than a surprise; it was hard for them to believe with the risen Christ before their eyes. He had told them that he would die and rise again; would be more to them, and

do more with them, after his death and resurrection than was possible for him to be and do in the flesh. But their as yet unspiritualized thought could not realize the Lord's meaning. It looks as though they often trusted his goodness and divineness more than his wisdom—as is the case with many of us, who worship Christ as the Son of God, but, unconsciously, doubt his good sense in insisting upon heavenly virtues in men who live and trade amidst earthly surroundings.

While Jesus' body lay in the tomb, the disciples walked with their eyes on the past. They saw the glory that had been, but not the glory that was to be. They moved about in the twilight and thought it was the gathering night, when, in truth, it was the dawn of morning. They knew that the world would never be won to a dead Christ, ruled by a dead King, however divine his being, true his words, and mighty his deeds. And they knew nothing, as yet, of our risen, ever-increasing Christ. So, though they believed Jesus to have been the Son of God, they seemed to themselves forced to the conclu-

sion that his mission to redeem Israel was a failure. Their hopes were buried in the sepulchre with Jesus.

But the death of Christ was the life of the world. He was the seed which God planted in the earth to spring up a divine humanity. He died that he might be reproduced in us as his spiritual fruit. He gave up his body of flesh that he might reign as the Christ of God in the life of the race. He went down into the grave that he might rise to take his place upon his throne, reigning as the righteousness of God in the soul of humanity. What the disciples thought to be Hope's death was Hope's fruition. What they thought the end was the beginning. And while they mourned, and sought Jesus in the sepulchre, God sent—with infinite delight and tenderness, I think—the resurrection angel to roll away the stone. The stricken women and bewildered men came to the tomb and found it empty. Jesus was not there; he had risen, and was going on before them. The visible Christ, cramped, limited and misunderstood while in the flesh, was dead,

The infinite Spirit-Christ was alive forevermore, soon to teach and empower the apostles as would have been impossible while he remained in the body. As a body he could only be where the apostles were—a local Christ. As the Spirit he would be the universal Christ—with them and all men, always and everywhere, convicting the world of sin, convincing it of judgment, converting it to righteousness. Living, he died the hated and rejected King of the Jews. Dying, he lives as the worshipped and accepted King unto whom every knee in heaven and on earth shall bow. What seemed to the disciples death was infinite life. What seemed man's failure was God's success. The disciples' sorrow was to be the world's conquering joy. The hope of man was dead; but the hope of God was kindling all the skies of human thought. From out the tomb of the Past arose the ever-brightening and enlarging Future, voiceful with God's promises, unfolding with God's purposes.

Again and again, Christ is betrayed by his disciples, for money, power, or favor with

the world, and delivered to his enemies to be crucified—or, betimes, put to death in the house of his friends. He is re-entombed in a creed, in a sect, in a school of theology, in a luxurious church, in a conceited civilization. Men who believe in his divinity, and profess his Saviourship, reject his authority and deny his power to save. They had hoped it was he who was to save the race from its sins, transmute the world's civilizations, and heal the ills of its nations. But they behold Christ only in the past. They regard the Christianity of Christ and the apostles as impracticable in human society. They view the unselfishness of the gospel of Christ as a mystic dream. Duties remain; but the living, conquering, reigning Christ is dead to their reckoning of how to meet the crises that crowd upon them from the future. And, while they mourn, and are often faithful even amidst their doubts, some flaming prophets of hope, kindled with the touch of God — God's new resurrection angels — roll away the stone from the door of the church; and forth there walks into the

thoughts of men a new, a risen, a larger, a mightier Christ; not new, not larger, not mightier in himself; but new to human understanding, mightier in human consideration, larger in human affection. Men take heart and hope again. The Lord is risen, and goes before them. Day swallows night. The crooked places grow straight. Vast problems are solved. Mammoth difficulties vanish from the way of human progress. No time is wasted in sorrowing about sepulchres, or in worrying about the safety of the truth. Men clasp hands, and their hearts abound with the same hope, and their feet march to the music of the same divine purpose, and they follow on the luminous path of their Lord to victory over the sin of the world.

It is the principle of the resurrection which is continually destroying the old forms of truth and re-creating them in new. It is the besetting temptation to the church's selfishness to conclude that all religious truth has been discovered. It excuses intellectual cowardice and spiritual indolence. We are apt to get hold of some small section of the truth

and then fancy we have the whole truth—as though God had tired himself out, and exhausted his resources. Then follows the disassociation of truth from life; and we the church constitute ourselves the truth's constables—forgetting that love is the true discoverer, and life the only conserver, of the truth. Thus, disassociated from life, the truth, instead of making us free, transforms us into slaves. And too often, alas! the church casts out those who come, in the simplicity of a joyous faith, bringing to it some sweeter and larger experience, with the old, indignant question, Doth thou teach us?

To such a church, or age, God always sends the messengers of his wrath, who are also prophets and quickeners of life. They beat down the cherished conceptions of the truth, and bury them from out the church's faith. The church looks aghast. The truth of God seems a ruin. The walls of the kingdom appear broken down with sacrilegious hands, beyond repair. The church stones and burns the prophets. But, while it is busy repairing

and defending its ruins, the believing are discovering that Truth is not there, but is risen; and unforeseen forces are upbuilding a new and better church. A vaster and more resplendent vision of the truth gets possession of the church's mind. It comes to realize the truth as the life of God apprehended by the life of man, rather than a system of religious mechanics. It was not the truth that perished, after all the sorrow, and battle, and storm, but simply the old and out-worn form of the truth, within which men were resting in indolent and selfish ease. The truth must die in order to escape death. Truth must die that it may live.

The truth is never in danger. Whether buried by friends or foes, it always rises again with a mightier vitality, a more resistless power, and a diviner glory. But the destruction of a half-truth or an old form of truth, is always necessary to the entrance and mastery of a larger truth in the life of the race. God suffers the destruction of states, churches, religions, sciences; not that men may be left without truth and knowledge and law; but

that better laws and freer states and purer churches and wider knowledge and clearer visions of truth may arise to realize the kingdom of heaven upon the earth.

Humanity has but yet touched the hem of Truth's garment. And we need to be watching, for there is drawing near one of the hours in which the Son of Man cometh quickly, when we think not, bringing his reward with him, to render to every man according as his work is. God is in travail with the birth of a new and diviner era. The Spirit is about to show us things to come. Vast continents of spiritual discovery are beckoning to some Columbus of the spiritual world—a Paul, or a Calvin,—to launch from the Past and sail with heavenly winds across the unresting sea of human thought into the larger possessions of the Future. It is time we awakened from our sleep, and put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand in the transcendent moral struggles that are moving upon us with the swiftness of divine judgment. If we would follow on to know the Lord, to realize his truth, to share in the glory of his

triumphs, let us seek him not simply amidst the old forms that have wrapped the truth awhile in the past. The eager Lord has many great and glad things to say unto us; but we cannot bear his revelations of the future while we linger among the successes and failures, the duties and disappointments, of yesterday; among the systems that are vanishing. He is not there; he is risen; he goes before us. Let us arise, and follow him!

The resurrection is the principle of all human growth and achievement. We are always dying and being born again into better and larger spheres; always failing that we may succeed, submitting that we may conquer. Every living life is a continuous resurrection.

True, death sometimes seems stronger than life. Death is swift and relentless; life seems slow and meager. We break with the things of the past, one by one. Bridge by bridge, we cross our Rubicons. Step by step, we descend from our dreams into unforeseen realities. Grave by grave, we bury the long-

cherished hopes of happiness that seem sweeter to us than life itself. As we follow on to know and obey the Lord's plan in our life, we find ourselves leaving the sun-lit paths at our feet for the crags and torrents, where await us peril, and battle with hidden foes. We discover some of our costliest thoughts to have been falsehoods; some of the plans we fancied mightiest to have been puny and childish. We meet with sore defeat where we foresaw only victory. The kingdom we sought comes through the annihilation of our own ambitions. We learn, experience by experience, that silent, secret, vicarious suffering, never to be known or understood, is the price we pay for being the helpers and saviors of our brothers, and the doing of our best work in the world. And the strongest heart grows faint, sometimes, and the bravest soul grows sick; and from out the enclosing shades of Gethsemane the soul cries aloud the cry of its Master, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" But the cup is not taken from the sinful, any more than from the Sinless

One. We drink it and die. Once more the blind, selfish, shrinking, rebellious self is crucified and entombed. To our dull vision, life is all in the past. To adorn the sepulchre of our buried hopes seems the sweetest and sacredest duty that remains.

But, while we weep and wait, the broken hope arises in a larger and better fruition than had ever entered into our holiest dreams. What we thought death was more life. Our disappointment was God's appointment of a higher task and diviner being. When we expected it not, an angel of the Lord—a friend, a word, an experience, the flash of a truth—rolled away the stone that buried us among the things of the past; and forth we went, with chastened purposes and softened steps, into a wider and brighter future, on a vaster mission, into a sweeter and nobler destiny. It was needful that the old plan of life should be thwarted, the old search for happiness end, the old purpose of usefulness die, in order that we might proceed upon a more unselfish life, radiant with a more Christly happiness, mastered by a nobler purpose.

We needed to die to self before God could pour his life into and through us. We had to experience our own nothingness that we might become specimens of God's loving almightiness. We must be forever dying that we may live.

All life grows out of death. We live no more than we die. We are making the sublimest successes when we seem to ourselves to be making the saddest failures. Through the rifts of our shattered lives shines the glory of the Christ-life that we may not walk in the darkness of selfishness. The noblest deeds of men are resurrections from the graves of buried hopes. The graves of self are the mounts of victory from which we foresee and hail the coming of the empire of Christ into the possession of the life of the world. Out of the wrecks of our selfish plans we enter as helpers into the lives of others. The secret crosses we carry deep in our hearts are the signets of a divine mission, and the weapons of power we use for God in the service of man. The travailings of our souls are the birth-throes of our Christ-

imaged characters. · Tombs are prophecies to eyes of faith. The march of death is but the victorious stride of increasing life to the pure in heart.

And if we seem to be kept waiting long, betimes, in our doubts and uncertainties, if death seems so swift and sure, and our resurrection angels so slow, it is because they are weighted with the wealth of the eternities, and must open to us the great doors of God's futures as they come. God speaks naught but a language of hope to listening ears, and writes the heavens with promises to seeing eyes. He appoints a resurrection angel for every self-renounced thought and deed. That up into which he is lifting us, that for which he is redeeming us, is the exhaustlessness of his own life; the freedom of his own action; the infiniteness of his own sphere; the fullness of his own love. It is toward this high destiny—

> "That man is hurled
> From change to change unceasingly,
> His soul's wings never furled."

The cost of character, the price we pay for

moral endowment, is indeed great—both to ourselves and God. We press on through inward tumult, through outward conflict and defeat, through toil of hands and soul, through loss and death, through the ambushes of spiritual enemies, through illusions and self-deceptions; forever rising from the ashes of ourselves; pierced through and through with the arrows of grief; all scarred with wounds;—and the finest souls must pass through the fiercest flames, so that you can sometimes see the soul's divineness issuing white-heated from the fire of God like the molten metal from the furnace;—but through and above all these things we rise to reach the goal of God; we suffer, we battle, we toil; we walk with uplifted and beseeching hands of prayer; but we triumph; yea, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

The resurrection is an ever-present experience to the growing life. *Death is growth; death is life*—whether of the subtle thing we call truth, or of a human soul in the likeness of Christ, who was the truth of God bodily.

A life of spiritual victory is a daily burial of self in Christ, and a daily resurrection into a larger and more incorruptible life. Every day the mortal must be swallowed up in the immortal; and the world and flesh be overcome through him who overcame. The higher we rise with Christ, the deeper must be our death in him; till at last we rise to receive from him the crown of deathless life.

With what assuring tenderness the Lord prepared his disciples for the end of his earthly days! With that spiritual delicacy which shrinks from involving others in even the most needful sufferings, he worded his parting thoughts with a divine gentleness. "A little while," he said, "and ye behold me not; and again a little while and ye shall see me." But not until after the enlightenment of the Spirit, did they understand the fullness of his meaning, and receive the great joy that was born to them and all the world from out this "little while" of which he spake. "A little while" they would linger in the shadow of the Lord's sepulchre; but

soon would dawn the glory of the resurrection morning, which has been increasing, and expelling the earth's darkness, ever since; and which shall grow ever more glorious until "there shall be night no more."

It is only "a little while" in which we have to do for him who for us has done so much more than our thought can measure, or our gratitude fathom. It is but "a little while" we have in which to partake of his sufferings for our brother-men ere he calls us to partake of his heavenly glory. For "a little while" he asks us to walk the earth with bleeding feet, into its waste places and sad, in search of the lost and blind, that we may by and by sit down with him on immovable thrones of righteousness. Just "a little while" he gives us in which to prove our love for him by feeding his sheep and carrying his lambs; "a little while" in which to sing our gratitude in deeds of love and mercy; "a little while" in which to forget ourselves in binding up the broken-hearted, healing the sick in soul, hushing human strifes, bearing the burdens of the weak, putting crowns of promise on

the discouraged, opening eyes that are blinded with hate, unstopping ears that are deafened with doubt; "a little while" in which to become elements of strength and peace in the world; "a little while" in which to serve, that we may, at last, be worthy to reign with him; "a little while" to move amid the shadows ere we enter the realms of light.

And again "a little while" and we shall see him, face to face, and glory to glory. When the work of our rude hands has ceased, and the confusion of our tongues is silent, and the strife of our sects is hushed; when the unbelief that prevents his power has vanished with the creeds that obscure his beauty; the ravishing vision which will then gather us about unclosing doors of perennial life, and draw our eyes forever away from self, will be the unveiling splendor, the resistless grace, the spiritual majesty of the Lord Christ. He is descending from the heavens upon a throne, arraying the race in his holiness; and his kingdom ruleth over all the earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell eter-

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nal and secure. And from out the throne a voice is saying unto men: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

"It shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

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